

CANADIAN

Commonite

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**Work &
Sabbath**

Page 6

New covenant

Page 10

Canada experiences renewal

Canada is experiencing an unexpected renewal in organized religion, according to the pre-eminent researcher of Canadian religious behaviour, University of Lethbridge sociologist Reginald Bibby.

Bibby, in *Restless Churches* (just out from Novalis), describes some surprising shifts in Canadian society based on research completed late last year.

I was energized by his data. The changes spell good news for the church—if we can respond faithfully and skillfully to God’s activity in our communities.

Abandoning the dry stance Bibby feels academics are expected to have, he states in plain language that he is writing to encourage the church in its mission. “This book is aimed primarily at Christians,” he writes. “Those who value Christian faith have a unique opportunity that may well be the envy of people in other groups. But Christians aren’t doing a particularly good job of seizing that opportunity. This book is intended to give them some help.”

Like the stirring of the Jerusalem waters when God came near, Bibby sees signs of new life stirring in Canadian churches. These contradict conventional wisdom that Christian churches are on a steady slide into oblivion due to our secular society, new religious movements, postmodernism, consumerism or other factors that might suggest the church has had its day.

First, national surveys in 2002 and 2003 show weekly church attendance, the gold standard of church vitality in sociological surveys, has gone up in Canada for the first time since surveys began. Attendance has been sliding downwards since 1945, when more than 60% of adults went to church regularly. By 2000, it was at 21%. But in 2003, that figure jumped to 26%. That’s about an additional one million adults, plus their kids, who are coming to church

regularly—people who weren’t doing so three years ago.

Second, teenagers and young adults had been showing even less interest in church than the population as a whole, something Bibby felt in 1993 was going to leave churches even more empty in 10 years as congregations aged. But those predictions haven’t come about.

In these groups, just as with the population as a whole, attendance has either started going up (as is the case with teenagers) or stabilized (as with young adults).

“In the post-1960s, lots of people gave up on the churches. However, these kinds of research finds suggest God didn’t give up on Canada’s churches. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that God is stirring in the churches—shaking them up even as God has been stirring in the lives of Canadians,” Bibby writes.

It’s exciting to see this kind of growth in the Canadian church after so many years of decline.

But what’s even better news for our church is that, out of the group that don’t go to church regularly, 55% of adults and 40% of teens say they would consider being more involved with a religious group if they found it worthwhile for themselves or their families.

When half the non-churched adult population says, as in Psalm 34:8, that they are willing to taste and see if the Lord is good, that’s a mission calling for the church.

Bibby has much more to say on how churches should go about reaching out to these millions of Canadians. For the Mennonite Church, the basics involve reaching out to inactive Mennonites, caring for our youth, keeping track of members after they move and making sure Mennonites marry other Mennonites.

The key message I see in the numbers is that God is at work in a powerful way in this country. Indications are we are moving into a time of special opportunity for the church. Let’s follow up on God’s work.—**Timothy Dyck**

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Head office: 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: (519) 884-3810 **Toll-free:** 800-378-2524 **Fax:** (519) 884-3331
E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Editor/Publisher: Timothy Dyck
 E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Staff: Margaret Loewen Reimer, managing editor; Natasha Krahn, admin. assistant; Tammy Sawatzky, art director; Barb Draper, editorial assistant.

Advertising: Barbara Burkholder **Phone:** 800-316-4052
Fax: (519) 884-3331 **E-mail:** advert@canadianmennonite.org

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National correspondent: Leona Dueck Penner, Winnipeg. Phone: (204) 888-6781.

E-mail: dueck-penner@mennonitechurch.ca

Regional correspondents:

Eastern Canada: Maurice Martin, Phone: (519) 662-1031

E-mail: mauricem@sympatico.ca

Manitoba: Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Phone/Fax: (204) 745-2208

E-mail: erpetkau@cici.mb.ca

Saskatchewan: Karin Fehderau, Phone: (306) 933-4209

E-mail: k.fehderau@sasktel.net

Alberta: Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Phone: (780) 436-3431

E-mail: timanddonita@attglobal.net

British Columbia: Angelika Dawson, Phone: (604) 870-0494

E-mail: ajdawson@telus.net

Board of directors: *British Columbia:* Henry Neufeld, John W. Goossen

Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Jan Wilhelm. *Saskatchewan:* Bernie

Thiessen. *Manitoba:* Aiden S. Enns, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn.

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This Issue

October 18, 2004
Volume 8, Number 20



Page 23

4 **UpClose**
Gift-giving **4**
Pastor to Holy Land **5**

6 **Faith&Life**
Work and Sabbath **6**

9 **InConversation**
Choosing a president **9**

10 **WiderChurch**
Saskatchewan covenant **10**
Von Gunten appreciation **12**
Lancaster joins U.S. church **14**
Assembly evaluation **15**
Focus on travel **17**

18 **LocalChurch**
Children and missions **18**
Manitoba ordinations **21**
Volunteers attacked **23**
Transitions **24**

26 **TheChurches**

30 **ToTomorrow**



Page 32

Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Nov. 1 issue by Oct. 28.

Cover: Barbara Nkala from Zimbabwe speaks in Winnipeg. See page 13. MC Canada photo.



Winnipeg, Man.

Gift-giving in the spirit of Christmas

A modest and lively older couple, Jake and Katherine Smith (a pseudonym), have developed a Christmas gift exchange with an unusual twist. Instead of buying each other things they don't really need, they donate money to a project identified by Mennonite Church Canada.

In return, they receive a small mystery gift, which includes information and stories from the project area.

At their Christmas family gathering with children and grandchildren, they especially enjoy the sense of surprise as they open a gift with no idea what's inside until they read the letter.

The idea began a few years back in a conversation Jake had with Jake Harms, then general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He asked what gift Harms suggested for a wife who says, "I only have one neck and don't need more necklaces." Harms suggested several areas of need to which they could contribute instead of giving each other gifts.

For four or five years, their gifts to each other were contributions towards the publication of the J.J. Thiessen biography to which they had personal connections.



This trinket box and rag doll from Colombia were surprise Christmas gifts to a couple that chooses to donate to others instead of exchanging gifts.

After that, Jake asked Jack Suderman of MC Canada Witness about contributing on a more significant scale. Suderman suggested a bursary program at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary of Colombia in Bogota, Colombia.

That Christmas, in response to their donation, they received their first surprise gift—a beautifully crafted trinket box made in Colombia.

There was a Spanish letter inside from the director of the seminary, Alix Lozano, along with an English translation. The letter told how their gift made a difference for one bursary recipient, a married woman who works with people displaced by war and violence in Colombia.

"I don't know where the money is coming from that allows me to continue to study," the woman said in the letter. "But I know that these must be persons that love the Lord a lot and they must love the church too.... I have learned so many good things in this year of studying at the seminary, and now I feel much better equipped to serve. I thank God for these persons."

Lozano concluded, "I trust that the Spirit of Christmas allows us all to remember that God became human, and comes to live among even poor

Christmas with a difference

Thanks to the generosity of people like Jake and Katherine, Mennonite Church Canada has developed a new way to share God's love with sisters and brothers around the world at Christmas time.

Christmas with a Difference is a giving alternative for people who want to shift their perspective to those who get by on significantly less. Families, groups of friends, and congregations are encouraged to join in making a gift of \$1,500 or more to ministries in Macau or Colombia. (While \$1,500 is a minimum goal, all gifts are valued.)

In return, MC Canada will send a gift from the recipient's culture. A brochure of the program reads, "While the gift is a token of appreciation, it will be

packaged with the most valuable of items: a story of how God's healing and hope is making a difference in someone's life."

In Macau, a city state of China renowned for its gambling and prostitution, the gift will be used in church planting. In Colombia the gifts will support Colombian Mennonite seminary teachers who work tirelessly at developing church leadership in a country torn apart by 50 years of civil war.

For more information, call Al Rempel or Karen Peters at 1-866-888-6785 or visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/christmas.htm

Let MC Canada know of other ways we could make your Christmas special—we are open to new ideas.—MC Canada release

Cambridge, Ont.

Congregation sends pastor to Holy Land

Pastors, like Mark Twain, can “live on a good compliment for two weeks.” But Wanner Mennonite Church here gave its pastor a far more lasting gift when they sent him on a two-week tour of Israel/Palestine.

It began last January when Robert Witmer encouraged pastor Don Penner to go on the MennoJerusalem Tour of the Holy Land. The tour is led by Witmer’s brother, Glenn, who edits the “MennoLetter from Jerusalem” and serves as Israel liaison to North American Mennonite churches.

Because Penner had only been at the Wanner church for two years, he could not take a sabbatical leave. Nor did he have personal savings for such a trip. He told Witmer: “God’s really gonna have to show me that this should happen!”

Then the people of God got into action. Witmer talked to his brother-in-law, Paul Martin, a member of the Wanner church. Martin, a retired pastor,



Photo by Maurice Martin

Don Penner (left) was offered a trip to the Holy Land, thanks to church members such as Paul Martin (right).

got up in church and promoted the tour. “I know someone who should go, and that is our pastor. I’m ready to cover the pulpit for the two Sundays he is gone. What are you prepared to do?”

Martin commented: “A few of us had talked and felt he would be a wonderful candidate for the trip; it would be good for him, and good for us.”

Janice Snider, the church council chair, picked up on the idea. The council found that Penner had not used all his continuing education funds from the previous years and decided to make those available. They agreed to pay two-thirds of the cost. Donors from the congregation covered the balance.

“The whole congregation took hold of this thing,” said Penner. “They even threw a going away party for me. And on my return, they came out in droves to see my pictures from the trip.”

Penner described the experience as “inspirational, powerful, a wonderful combination of personal faith pilgrimage and biblical nuts and bolts.”

He added: “The sayings of Jesus take on new meaning when set in geographical context.” Glenn Witmer speaks of the geographical setting as “the fifth gospel” (taken from a book by

that title). He invites people to reflect on how the physical surroundings might have inspired Jesus to say what he did.

Penner sensed that the congregation saw this as a good investment in their pastor.

Martin stated, “The payback is wonderful, I’d say. It’s a great thing for a congregation to do, to give their pastor such an opportunity.”—**Maurice Martin**

Christmas From page 4

people like us and lives in solidarity with us all. I wish to extend a warm embrace to you both.”

“That was worth a lot more than opening up knick knacks!” says Jake.

“Or receiving another necktie!” chimes in Katherine.

“We can give more this way,” says Jake, “since you get half of it back through income tax receipts!”

Last year, Jake and Katherine’s MC Canada donation went to development projects sponsored by the Colombian Mennonite Church. Families are finding employment through small businesses, such as marketing crafts. Their surprise gift last year included a rag doll from one of these communities.

This year, they are contributing to a church planting project in Macau.

Jake notes that this style of gift-giving gives them more interest in the regions where MC Canada is working, and it allows them to pray with greater awareness for the people involved.—**Leona Dueck Penner**

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Work defined by Sabbath rest

Our lives are driven by the work we do—and how fast we can do it. What if we shaped our lives instead by the biblical notion of the Sabbath? Harry Huebner explores this question in the following Labour Day sermon.

We are a people obsessed with the clock. Be on time! Don't go overtime. Time is money. Time's up. Things have to move forward and things must move fast! We are a restless people.

Our labour has produced a device—the clock—and we have become its slaves. We are a clock-wise people. Or are we? (Wise, that is?)

What if instead of the clock we shaped our lives by Sabbath rest? I suspect that this is hard for us to imagine, so let me try an analogy. Several years ago, I spent a few days with an Amish bishop and his family in Ohio. After living and worshipping with them, I made the observation that Amish life is governed by the horse. The horse determines so much of what they do—the pace, the distance they can travel, the speed, their very style of life.

The Amish agreed, and they were proud of it. They said they fear for us “modern Mennonites” because we have no horse to limit us, no way to protect ourselves from the pace of the world.

They may well be right. We are governed by speed. We find waiting incredibly hard. We glorify immediate results. Our lives are governed by the possible, the affordable, the fastest.

I'm not going to suggest that we throw away our clocks and buy horses. That may be good for the horse and buggy industry but it would likely kill us as an urban community and destroy many of our cherished institutions.

Can you imagine going to church by horse and buggy? But then, the Amish do not “go to church;” they talk about “the church meeting” on Sunday morning. “Meeting” is an altogether more local, communal notion. Going to church, especially our favourite church that may be across town, requires at least some speed.

What would it mean to have our lives shaped instead by the biblical notion of work and Sabbath rest? How might we reflect the image of God in our work and rest? Let's look at this idea from three vantage points, beginning with the creation story where the Sabbath is first introduced.

Creation story

In the creation story, God worked for six days, then God rested. Fast worker, you might say. Or nice job, in a short time! But that's not the point. Speed has nothing to do with it.

One of the ways that the story functions in the biblical imagination is to set a pattern—a kind of rhythm—for wholesome living. We have that pattern entrenched in our practices to

Remember the
Sabbath
and keep it holy.

Six days you shall *labour*
and do all your work.

But the seventh day is a
Sabbath to the
Lord your God....

this day—for example, the seven-day week, with six days of work followed by a day of rest.

The fourth commandment enshrines this pattern: “Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it” (Exodus 20:8-11).

Why should we do it? Because God did it. And because this pattern has a lot to say for itself. It is a way of keeping human energy flowing so we can do our work healthily. People who keep regular Sabbath rest are better and happier workers. This practice fosters community when all within the group set aside the same day.

Yet, the creation story is not just a morality play suggesting that we order our lives the way God does. The story defines the created order itself, and our role within it. We are not meant to work perpetually. We will not last. We need rest.

But not only that; if we work without end we will think that everything depends upon us. And that is sin, for it excludes God. The point of the creation story is that God is the basis of all of life. And God invites us into God’s work. Not everything depend upon us.

God can use both our work and our rest. Even when we are doing nothing we are in God’s care and God may be working through us. How we do nothing is as important as how we do something!

The creation story, and the Sabbath story, tell us that we can afford to rest because the work is not ours; it is God’s. We can afford to work, because the work is not ours, it is God’s. We can rest not merely in order to become more efficient workers on Monday morning, but we can rest because whether we work or rest God gives the blessing.

Sabbath year

The second vantage point is the tradition of the Sabbath year: The story of creation not only sets a pattern for individual work habits, it sets up a pattern for justice. We cannot understand the biblical view of justice without understanding our work as Sabbath rest.

Leviticus 25 sets up the model for how to understand work in the Promised Land. As the children of Israel were wandering in the desert they knew that their survival depended on God’s hand. They had no way to produce their own food, or their own security; they were entirely at the mercy of God’s care.

But once they settled in a fertile land, it was much harder to see that God gave them what they had. Think of the contrast. In a desert you can’t work—you do not have any resources to produce anything. When you get to fertile land everything changes. Now you are the producer! The temptation is great to make happen what you want to have happen.

The Leviticus passage is a way of imagining our work through the Sabbath. Sabbath rest governed the Israelites in the desert and it was intended to continue in the promised land. The land is a wonderful resource, an opportunity for food and security. As immigrant people we can identify with the joy that comes with receiving the gift of land.

The land functions as a symbol much like the Garden of Eden did in the creation story. The opportunity to make something with our own hands is one of God’s greatest gifts to us. But how do we keep this wonderful gift from going away? How do we keep it from becoming a curse instead of a blessing? One answer is the Sabbath year.

“When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a Sabbath for the Lord” (Leviticus 25:2). Then follow the details: after six years you shall leave your fields fallow for one year, and you shall set your prisoners free, and forgive your debtors their debt. After seven cycles of seven years, you shall return the land to its original ownership clan.

“What a number that would do on our economy,” you say. When I ask my students to redefine the rules for the game of Monopoly according to the Sabbath year, they come back and say, “It destroys the game. You just go on and on. No one ever wins.” Bingo! That’s right.

When you have Sabbath rest define your work, you don’t work to destroy the other; your work builds up both you and the other. When Sabbath rest defines work—as the creation story, the Mosaic commandments, and the provisions of the

We are governed by speed. We find waiting incredibly hard. We glorify immediate results. Our lives are governed by the possible, the affordable, the fastest.

Sabbath *From page 7*

Sabbath year all suggest—then redemption is embedded right into our work routines.

When Sabbath rest defines our work we recognize that the success of our labours depends on God's blessing, and God cannot bless injustice. When Sabbath rest is the focal point of our efforts, then grace characterizes our work.

Salvation by grace

This gets me to the last vantage point: Salvation by grace through faith. The Jewish leaders lived by the Sabbath commandment and condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. It is so easy to make the detailed keeping of the law our possession, our weapon to forward God's cause.

But Jesus is a master of disallowing anyone to take control away from God—whether through power, production, wealth, piety, or the keeping of the law. The Sabbath is good, but not in itself; it is good in that it points to God as the one from whom our blessings flow.

The Sabbath is the very symbol of God's gift of life to us. To use it as a way of withholding God's grace is diabolical. How better to show that than to heal someone—extend God's grace—on a Sabbath day.

When the New Testament writers use the phrase "salvation by grace through faith" they are not inventing a new theology. They are using new words to communicate the relationship between work and rest that exists throughout scripture.

In the final analysis, the relationship between our work and God's blessing is not a relationship of cause and effect, but one of our faithfulness and God's blessing. It is not what

we do that makes our work worthwhile, it is what we allow God to do through us, whether we work or not.

The article I wrote in *Canadian Mennonite* on "Being stuck with our parents" (May 31) seems

to have struck a chord with people whose parents are aging. I have been particularly struck with one response: How could my mother-in-law still be a sign of God's grace to us even when she could do nothing, say nothing, or perhaps even think nothing?

Surely the answer is that under God we cannot be reduced to the work we do, but rather to what we allow God to do through us. And when we do nothing at all, God may still be doing much through us, perhaps even more than when we do a lot.

It is not what we do that makes our work worthwhile, it is what we allow God to do through us, whether we work or not.

The story of creation with the emphasis on Sabbath rest teaches us that we should not reduce our work to what we can accomplish with our own hands. For the ongoing challenge remains to open our hands and our minds, whether we work or we don't, and place them into God's creative and redemptive care. The blessing will follow.

The above is from a sermon given at Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on September 5. The writer, currently on sabbatical leave, teaches theology and philosophy at Canadian Mennonite University.

Prayer

Come, let us prepare our hearts for worship:
bringing the clutter and clamour of our busy lives
into God's presence
settling our scattered thoughts
and stilling our scrambling minds
as we open ourselves to the Creator of the Sabbath
who often speaks in a still small voice
in unexpected places
when we step aside to listen.

Come, let us breathe in that calming spirit
as we, like Mary, sit at the feet of One
who spent time "away" for rest and reflection
One whose understanding of work and sabbath rest
embraced the whole of life:
as he preached good news to the poor,
fed the hungry
healed the sick
and freed those in bondage
(breaking Sabbath rules when necessary)
so that all might experience life abundantly,
right now, not in some distant future.

Come, let us claim that promise of new life
for ourselves
and for our troubled world
as we praise God through our songs, our prayers, and our reflections.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

This call to worship, by Leona Dueck Penner, accompanied the sermon presented here.

Must U.S. Mennonites choose abortion or war?

I polled the students in my Goshen College Transforming Conflict and Violence class on whom they plan to support in the United States presidential election in November.

Those leaning in John Kerry's direction uniformly cited President George Bush's invasion and occupation of Iraq as their motivating issue. Those supporting Bush pointed toward Kerry's support of legal abortion. Both sides felt justified that their reasoning aligned them with Anabaptist values of peace and nonviolence.

For this group of students, the choice was clear. They could either vote for someone who supports the daily killing of unborn children or someone who preemptively and under false pretences waged war against Iraq.

I did have a few students who said, in essence, "A pox on both their houses—I'm not voting for either one!" Their viewpoint is echoed by some learned Mennonites who urge nonparticipation in presidential politics as symbolic conscientious objection to choosing the country's commander-in-chief.

However, unlike a conscientious objector's refusal to participate in the military or pay war taxes, those who opt out of electoral democracy actually benefit the powerful interests who have little concern for innocent life. What could assist the merchants of death more than for Christ's people of peace to stand aside as competing causes quest for power?

Ted Grimsrud, in his article "Anabaptist faith and American democracy" (*Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July 2004), furthers the case for full participation in the political process. Grimsrud, a professor of theology at Eastern Mennonite University, suggests that the U.S. Mennonite legacy of separating from the world is misplaced if it results in withdrawal from civic engagement.

On the contrary, we are called to nonconformity with the world's ways of building empires and exploitation because we are then better suited to point the world toward the ways that make for peace.

Still, given the two bad choices spelled out by my students, what is a politically engaged U.S. Anabaptist to

Although George Bush is the 'pro-life' candidate, John Kerry's position on abortion is actually not that far from the Mennonite resolution on abortion.

do on November 2? Vote by lot?

First, it would be helpful to realize that the portraits drawn of each candidate are not as one-dimensional as some partisans would have us believe. Although George Bush is the "pro-life" candidate, John Kerry's position on abortion is actually not that far from the Mennonite resolution on abortion.

Kerry has stated his personal opposition to abortion but also opposes legislating his beliefs on others who don't share his faith. Similarly, the resolution passed by Mennonite

delegates in 2003 opposes abortion but stops short of calling for its criminalization.

On the issue of war-making, Bush clearly has a record out of step with Mennonite teaching. However, anyone who believes that Kerry or the Democratic Party are harbingers of peace and nonviolent intervention has ignored the similarity of both candidates' rhetoric on Iraq and militarism.

Second, politically mindful Mennonites would be wise to remember that casting a ballot on November 2 is only one step—and a very small one at that—toward seeking the shalom of the nation. Those serious about tithing their influence will look further for avenues to witness for justice and peace.

Finally, we can gather with fellow believers—as is done in my congregation—to discuss the real differences in the candidates' positions, discern how to vote, and act together in a variety of ways to effect change. Then we can worship and bring praise to our God who has not disengaged from the world, but who loves the world (John 3:16).—**Karl S. Shelly**

Excerpted from September 21 PeaceSigns, a monthly e-zine looking at the news through a Mennonite lens. See <http://peace.mennolink.org/peacesigns/index.html>.

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Saskatoon, Sask.

Saskatchewan churches consider new covenant

It has been over two years in the making, but the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan covenant is now ready for study by Saskatchewan churches.

In 2002, because of a perceived need for more unity, members requested that a re-covenanting service be held at the 2004 annual sessions. A year later, the job to create a covenant was given to conference minister Ken Bechtel and a group of representatives called the Envisioning Team.

The five-member team requested an extra year so that they could poll the churches. In the fall of 2003, a survey was sent out to all churches. This past spring, a proposed draft was sent to churches for response.

The resulting document reflects the input from those responses. The covenant was sent out to churches on September 21 (it is also posted online at <http://mcsask.ca/>). In an accompanying memo, Bechtel asks for a decision on “whether we as a conference should adopt this covenant” and “whether you as a congregation are willing to enter into this covenant.”

He notes that “the covenant will be submitted for formal adoption by the delegates at the February 25-26, 2005 delegate sessions.”

Pastor response to the document has been largely positive and even enthusiastic.

“I think it’s very good that we’re doing this,” said Jack Dyck, pastor at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon. “It’s vital for our mission here in Saskatchewan.”

“It says what needs to be said...it describes where we should be at this point,” noted Dave Feick, pastor at Hague Mennonite Church.

Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, described the covenant as “outlining in a general sense who we are [and] addressing the challenges and differences in who we are.”

Included is the option for churches not to join. Bechtel, on behalf of the Envisioning Team, suggests that, “To those not ready to enter this covenant, we state that we continue to value our connections and invite the deepening of that relationship.”

Garth Ewert Fisher, co-pastor of the Fiske and Herschel congregations, commented on the idea of being mutually accountable. “I have no quarrel with this section as it is stated. Of course, the problem comes when you unpack certain statements, such as, ‘we enter into these relationships of loving, caring, and mutual

accountability.’ The rub is on the phrase, ‘mutual accountability.’

“My observation is that we do little serious ethical/theological reflection on important issues. Annual general meetings are more about support, encouragement, and business than sustained theological reflection. On the latter, we are left to our own devices, and to resources culled from our own contacts. While I am not opposed to this (I hold the value of congregational autonomy to be very important), inter-church discussion could be illuminating.

“We live in an era of increasing pluralism of people, ideas, and beliefs,” Ewert Fisher continued. “The question of where authority is located (that is, in the pastor, the body, the Bible, etc.) will continue to be a live one. This pluralism also makes covenants more difficult. I am grateful that Ken and the others are guiding us forward in this process.”

The task ahead is for churches to study the document and to respond by February.—**Karin Fehderau**

Covenant states our best intentions

Whether in baptism, marriage, dedicating a child or renewing a commitment, we state our best intentions, and call on God’s resources, forgiveness for our failures and strength for new beginnings. “Covenant” is the biblical word for such living by promise.

Two years ago, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan delegates asked their leaders to lead them in a time of re-covenanting. The written covenant crafted for this purpose reflects input and revision by members of our constituency, several hundred by our calculation.

It seeks to describe our common centre, and the ways we choose to work together. The written covenant is

imperfect, as are those who crafted it and those who will choose to live within it. It is a declaration of our desire to live and work together for our perfect God whose good news we share “in word and deed.”

This covenant is but one part of the work of the conference-appointed Envisioning Team. This fall, our attention is shifting toward visioning—opening ourselves to God’s direction for our future. It is the prayer of the Envisioning Team and conference leadership that through this covenanting and visioning, we may grow together toward “maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).—**Ken Bechtel**

New president

Hesston, Kan.—Howard Keim, 52, has been named president of Hesston College. He will begin at Hesston on January 1, and assume the presidency in early May. A 1972 graduate of the college, Keim taught at Hesston from 1987 to 1996, including directing its Pastoral Ministries program. He holds a PhD in communication studies from the University of Kansas. Since 1996, he has been a professor and administrator at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas. “His background both as an academician and pastor will help set the framework to move Hesston to the next level,” said Norm Yoder, chair of the search committee. Keim was pastor of Kalona Mennonite Church in Iowa from 1979 to 1987. He is a former moderator of South Central Conference of Mennonite Church USA and now serves on the conference ministerial commission.—From Hesston release

Kitchener, Ont.

Meetings focus on proposed changes for MCEC

What is new in this proposal? How does this new direction affect us in the congregation?

These were questions asked at the first of six regional meetings to consider the “renewed identity and direction” proposal for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC).

The first meeting was held at Hillcrest Mennonite Church on October 5.

“On the governance/structure side, it does feel renewed,” said David Brubacher, Minister to Conference. “It feels different with the emphasis on intentional evaluation and transformation of programs.”

Marianne Mellinger, the consultant who is working on the process, pointed out changes that have been made based on delegate discussion last April. She also reported on June meetings of three focus groups, composed of MCEC staff, commission members and others. She was glad to see that staff were not entrenched in their jobs but were committed to discover more faithful ways to serve the churches.

Three essential tasks emerged from the focus groups: 1) evaluate programs; 2) equip leaders; 3) empower congregations.

The underlying question is: When we restructure, what will be different? The short answer was given under each “e” word. 1) Rather than continue programs year after year, we need a way to evaluate how we use our time, people resources and finances. A group will be formed in late fall to establish criteria for evaluating programs.

2) Rather than MCEC staff providing programs from a central office, they will ask congregations: What are you passionate about? How are you growing in faith? How can we empower you? It will be a side-by-side approach, not a top down model. MCEC helps keep the big picture before congregations.

3) MCEC wants to be more intentional about calling, training and supporting pastors. Leadership is becoming more complex, with fewer full-time pastors and lay people taking

increasing responsibility. How can we better support our pastors, increase pastoral care and encourage collegiality and mutual accountability among leaders? asked the focus groups.

Five councils

In terms of structure, the proposal names five councils to whom key MCEC staff will be accountable. There will be a staff Leadership Team composed of key staff from each council. The team will be led by the Executive Minister who will work with the Executive Council and focus primarily on promoting healthy, vibrant and spiritual congregations.

Much of the administrative details, including fiscal management, would become the responsibility of the Minister of Support Services.

The biggest change is in the Congregational Resources Council which would bring together the work done by the current commissions. (Someone said it is like trying to put 20 pounds of potatoes into a 10-pound bag!) Clearly there would need to be less micro-management by the five councils which replace the current ten commissions.

They would need to focus their vision and use ad hoc committees or pools of volunteers to carry out specific tasks. The key descriptors of council work are “facilitate,” “network,” “partnership,” “empower.”

MCEC would move away from centrally-planned events to the development and distribution of resources. Staff would become “brokers” between congregations which share resources. There are also inter-denominational and para-church resources which staff could use. This suggests that some fee for services would need to be paid.

Mellinger drew a triangle with “vision” at the centre, and financial resources, cultural context and current reality at the three points. All need to be considered as program and structures are evaluated.

There was considerable discussion about the Leadership Council. Are we talking about pastors only? Mixed-team models (ordained clergy and lay leaders) are emerging as well. This council would bring together the work of the current Leadership Commission and Pastoral Leadership Training Commission.

Who would be responsible to keep theological accountability before MCEC and its congregations? someone asked. The current Theological Concerns Council does not appear in the proposed structures.

There was some excitement about the potential of the “regional ministers” which are being proposed. They could give visibility to conference as well as support the ministries of the congregations.

Brubacher invited reflection on how one might “balance” the budget, not only in terms of making ends meet, but in finding the right balance of where we put our resources. Is the present 37 percent allocation of funds for staffing an appropriate proportion?

Someone concluded: “The initiative is not about conference, but about congregations.” This assumption, and many others, will be further tested in the other regional meetings.

On November 27 Executive Board, commissions and staff plan to process the results of this dialogue and prepare a presentation to the April delegate sessions.—From report by

Maurice Martin

MCEC structure

In the restructuring proposal, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada will do its work through five councils, each led by a staff person:

- Executive Council
- Congregational Resources Council
- Mission Council
- Leadership Council
- Support Services Council

The Leadership Team will consist of a staff member from each council.

Winnipeg, Man.

Appreciation evening honours Native Ministry couple

Hearth-felt tributes and blessings marked an “appreciation evening” for Neill and Edith von Gunten on September 17. About 150 friends and co-workers gathered at Bethel Mennonite Church to honour the couple for 35 years of Native Ministry service in northern Manitoba.

“This is an occasion for celebration,” said host Walter Franz, Native Ministry director, as he opened the program following a scrumptious meal of bison meat-balls, farmer sausage and fruit platz. “But its also sad and sober in the sense of phasing out long-term workers...due to the realities of financial restraints.”

Von Guntens will continue their work in Riverton, Pine Dock, Loon Straits and Matheson Island for another year. They will be supported by their home congregation in Berne, Indiana, individual donors, and other church partners: the Riverton Fellowship Circle, Matheson Island Community Chapel and two Winnipeg congregations, Bethel Mennonite and Sargent Avenue Mennonite.

The time of sharing was inter-



Neill and Edith von Gunten (left) receive a tribute from Jack Suderman, who is holding a copy of the book they compiled in 2003 entitled, *From Paddles to Propellers: The history of Matheson Island: A fishing community.*

persed with music by various groups, including Barbara Daniels and Terry Widrick. The four von Gunten children spoke about growing up on the shores of Lake Winnipeg and learning to love “the north” and its people.

Co-workers from Matheson Island, Loon Straits and Riverton read letters of appreciation which highlighted the couple’s “dependability,” leadership and great food. “We love you all for all your hard work,” said Doris Kozub to

Von Guntens recall journey to northern Manitoba

When Neill and Edith von Gunten left Indiana in August 1967 and drove to Winnipeg, they had little idea that they would spend almost four decades in Native Ministry in northern Manitoba.

The couple recounted their journey during an appreciation evening on September 17.

While in voluntary service in Chicago in the mid-1960s, von Guntens met Anne Neufeld of Manitoba who was doing her seminary practicum there. Neufeld suggested that Neill attend Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and that Edith apply as secretary at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada office.

They took Neufeld up on her suggestions and made their way to Winnipeg.

“It was there in the old conference headquarters...where Menno Wiebe introduced us to the Mennonite Pioneer Mission program of the conference, which later became Native Ministries,”

said Von Guntens.

“Menno asked if we would go to Bloodvein for the Christmas break from CMBC, while Ron and Doris Peters travelled back to Saskatchewan. We agreed and our downstairs neighbours at CMBC were horrified. Here were these ‘Americans’—who knew nothing at all about a Canadian winter yet—traipsing off north in December of all things. Their concern didn’t deter us—that tells you how naïve we were!”

That was the beginning of their “falling in love” with the north. They moved to Manigotagan in 1969.

“We learned so very much there—about living in the north, about ministry in a cross-cultural setting, about managing a fishing and pulpwood co-op and doing the bookkeeping, about being mayor... community development and youth work, and much more.”

In the mid-1970s they moved to Riverton on the west shore of Lake

Winnipeg and helped build a church there.

“Our theme here was the same as in Manigotagan—a loaf of bread or a hammer in one hand and a Bible in the other. Visitation was an important part of our ministry right from the start and the travelling has been a challenge. We have established many wonderful relationships with people over the years and we feel honoured that they accepted us so readily.”

The couple thanked “the people who made up the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and now Mennonite Church Canada. We have been able to minister on your behalf in these communities because of your support and encouragement all these years...”

The couple asked for prayers as they discern where God is leading them in the next years.

Native Ministry *From page 12*

the family. "You led us back to the right path. It was a huge task which required much patience and time."

Norman Meade, church leader at Manigotagan, spoke of the impact the von Guntens had on the whole community.

"You are expressions of good servants because: You gave us hope where there was no hope, light when it was dark, You found us when we were lost and brought healing when we felt pain.... You understood us when no one else did and prayed and walked with us.... You brought us peace when we were troubled and forgave us when we strayed.... You assured us of God's love.... I will try to follow in your footsteps."

Norman and Thelma Meade presented the von Guntens with beaded gloves and moccasins, saying, "This is for those who would like to walk a mile in our shoes; walk in these moccasins with pride."

Neill's parents from Indiana thanked the northern communities for what they had given the family and read a letter from the Berne congregation which noted the von Guntens' humour, compassion and humility.

"But, it would be a mistake to see them as givers only," concluded the letter. "They have received much from the people and Lake Winnipeg.... Accept our deepest appreciation."

Jack Suderman, director of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, noted that "we are celebrating not an end of ministry but a transition of ministry." He thanked the couple for their "committed, selfless service" which goes far beyond the northern congregations they served. "You are a model in so many ways...your tireless efforts, gentle nature, integrity and compassion."

Suderman presented the couple with a peace lamp as a symbol of their commitment, "representing internal peace, and a commitment to social peace and justice for people that have suffered and need reconciliation." They have been a voice for peace and demonstrated that peace, he said.

The evening ended with a circle of blessing and prayer.—From report by

Leona Dueck Penner

Ottawa, Ont.

Churches discuss refugee concerns with government

Canadian church leaders, including Bill Janzen of Mennonite Central Committee Canada's Ottawa Office, met with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on September 29 to discuss urgent issues of justice for refugees.

This meeting was a follow-up to a written appeal for changes the group sent to Minister Judy Sgro in August (see Sept. 6, page 12).

"What had triggered it was the sanctuary issue," Janzen told *Canadian Mennonite*. "There are about half a dozen sanctuary cases that involve churches at the present time. The minister did take seriously the concerns of the churches about cases where churches feel they must [offer sanctuary], and wanted to find a better way of dealing with such cases."

No Mennonite churches are currently offering shelter for refugees whose claims have been denied by the Immigration and Refugee Board, though there was one case of this in a British Columbia Mennonite church in the late 1980s.

A larger issue for Mennonite churches, according to Janzen, is the processing delay in private sponsorship of refugees from overseas. Canadian churches (including Mennonite) have resettled about 200,000 refugees to Canada over the past 25 years.

"Mennonites have used much more the overseas sponsorship, the private sponsorship of refugees," Janzen said. "There are enormous frustrations with that avenue because things move so slowly. The average wait is at least two years. A group commits themselves to sponsoring somebody. They set aside financial resources, organize their lives to have time, rent an apartment...and then they wait two years.... Similarly, to the refugee family stuck in a camp, all kinds of things can happen—medical tests are no longer valid.

"I had about seven minutes to speak on that and the Minister did say to me that waiting two years is not acceptable.... One cannot predict how things will improve but we did get to say our

piece at the highest level. I'm grateful for that. We do need to do follow up," said Janzen.

"As leaders rooted in the Christian faith, we called on our government not to link refugees with threats to national security, a dangerous association that fosters a climate of fear and hostility," stated Jane Orion Smith, General Secretary of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers), in a news release issued by KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

Church leaders and the Minister agreed to discuss refugee concerns again at a future meeting.—**Timothy Dyck**

Winnipeg, Man.

Nkala visits Winnipeg

Barbara Nkala, a Brethren in Christ Church leader from Zimbabwe, visited Winnipeg October 1-7 to make several presentations. She spoke at the North American Mennonite History Conference, and gave the John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite University (see cover).

Nkala also spoke to a full house at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery about the Mennonite World Conference assembly in her country in 2003 where she led worship. She noted that the event has put the city of Bulawayo and the Brethren in Christ Church "on the map," not only globally, but regionally. Many people have been seeking to know more about the church.

"There is no way I can forget what happened in Zimbabwe last year," she said. "Lots of people have said 'thank-you' [for coming]. Please pass it on. You have helped us so much."

Nkala is director of the International Bible Society of Zimbabwe and Malawi, and contributor to the Africa volume of *A Global Mennonite History*.—From MC Canada release

East Earl, Pa.

Lancaster joins Mennonite Church USA

Lancaster Mennonite Conference leaders voted on September 17 to join Mennonite Church USA.

In a vote requiring a two-thirds majority, 371 credentialed leaders (out of a possible 495) voted 69.5 percent in favour of joining the denomination. The leaders felt the solemnity of taking this historic step in their journey with God and the wider church, said Keith Weaver, moderator of the conference and one of its 26 bishops.

Weaver and the bishop board have led the discernment process since 2002, when Lancaster Conference became a provisional member of the newly formed Mennonite Church USA. Lancaster is the denomination's largest, with 190 congregations and 17,500 members.

'The outcome shows that we still have work to do, but it also shows that we are ready to move forward,' said Marcus Smucker, who led the periods of silence and prayer around the voting.

"The outcome shows that we still have work to do, but it also shows that we are ready to move forward," said Marcus Smucker, retired professor in pastoral theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, who led the periods of silence and prayer around the voting.

"The bishop board has worked hard with the congregations on learning how to come to discernment among strong differences."

Some members grappled with whether their convictions on homosexuality, women in leadership and biblical inerrancy would fit with the denomination. Also, the conference has a long-standing separate

identity and joining a larger group is a historic change. Some people are concerned that joining the denomination will dilute the work of Lancaster's mission agency, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

The recommendation allows for differing levels of engagement by congregations in the life of the denomination.

"I think one of the main gifts that we bring to the larger body is our commitment to be both evangelical and Anabaptist," said pastor Conrad Kanagy. "That brings with it some conservatism. But it also brings with it the desire for faithfulness..."

Weaver said that MC USA leaders gave much spiritual support to Lancaster conference during its discernment process. "No matter what the vote would have been, we have a desire to carefully tend our relationships."

On September 21, Franklin Mennonite Conference in Pennsylvania voted to join MC USA with a 71.6 percent majority. Their recommendation also gave room for congregations to choose their level of involvement in the denomi-

nation. Franklin has 14 congregations.

To date, 20 area conferences—out of 21—have fully joined MC USA. North Central conference plans to vote on it sometime next year.—From MC USA reports



Christian Medical Association photo

Volunteers from the Christian Medical Association (CMA) in Ukraine, a Mennonite Central Committee partner, unload a shipment of hospital supplies sent from MCC British Columbia. Supplies, including health kits, bandages, stretchers, wheelchairs and beds, came from hospitals in Vancouver, Abbotsford and Langley. They will be distributed to medical centres, homes for the elderly and children's homes. According to CMA director Alexander Doroshenko, people "become more receptive to the Gospel when it's acted out in daily life."—MCC release

Winnipeg, Man.

Winkler assembly gets high marks

Mennonite Church Canada folks like to meet in churches, and they like to celebrate. What's more, they like to meet at round tables in MC Canada churches.

Those are some of the messages from 175 registrants at Winkler 2004 who filled out their evaluation forms—a 29 percent response rate. About 71 percent rated the assembly as very good—one of the highest ratings in recent years. Only 2 percent said it was fair or disappointing.

There was a general sense of satisfaction, said Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of Support Services and staff planning leader for the event. Although detailed accounts aren't in yet, it's expected that higher than anticipated registration numbers will help push the assembly into the black.

"Our goal was to try and help assembly goers experience unity instead of talking about it," said Peters-Pries. "Various aspects contributed to that positive feeling. People really liked meeting in a church, and moreover in an MC Canada church," added Peters-Pries, commenting that she personally liked the feeling of volunteers welcoming people to their home church, and seeing familiar items on bulletin boards, like pictures of students attending Mennonite schools.

"I think it helps people feel at home," she said. There were virtually no complaints about the facility at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

People also appreciated the roundtable discussions. One respondent wrote, "This was the best MC Canada Assembly I have attended by far. The morning format of round tables, worship and discernment is great because we are all rarin' to go at 8:30 a.m."

Another wrote, "This [roundtables] must be continued! It felt like I was on holy ground."

The evening worship times and sermons were also a highlight for many.

About 83 percent of respondents said MC Canada should again invite resolutions in advance of the assembly, but not to the exclusion of resolutions from the floor.

The Festival in the Park, an

intergenerational event in which assembly goers interacted with MC Canada ministries, also proved to be a hit. Out of 203 respondents, 190 were in favour of holding a similar event again. Planners estimate that over 800 people attended the festival.

Anecdotally, the children's assembly received rave reviews from kids and parents alike during the assembly. Several parents reported that their youngsters resisted leaving the program for meal times, preferring to stay at their activity stations. Viola Woelk, lead organizer, achieved her goal of engaging the younger set in the assembly theme, rather than simply offering "a babysitting service."

One of the biggest challenges was the unprecedented number of walk-up participants—nearly 100 out of 596 guests came without having pre-registered, including some families with children.

"We always build in some room for walk-ups, both for meals and slots for children," said Peters-Pries, "but this year we had significantly higher numbers..." She stressed that participants must pre-register to avoid disappointment.

Another planning challenge is to offer the right amount of choice. Offering seminars concurrently with discernment sessions and tours presented assembly goers with a lot of choice.

"A good portion of folks like that choice, especially if they do not have delegate responsibilities," said Peters-Pries, noting that this year 401 of the total 596 people registered were on delegate duty. "But it also means that a good number feel conflicted. They would like to attend a concurrent seminar, but carry a commitment to their delegate duties. People also just need time to rest."

While the feedback is useful for



Photo by Dan Dyck

Caley Dyck shows off her square in the quilt created at the Festival in the Park at Winkler 2004. The quilt is on display at the Mennonite Church Canada offices in Winnipeg.

future planning, duplicating Winkler 2004 will be nearly impossible.

"There are virtually no other MC Canada congregations that have facilities like Winkler Bergthaler, where we would have room to host roundtable discussions for 600 or more people," said Peters-Pries. And on alternate years when youth and adult assemblies are held jointly, registration can easily swell to over 1,000, requiring large worship and dining spaces and plenty of lodging.

"For an adult assembly, Winkler has a great combination of space, volunteer base, community venues, and lodging," she noted. "It will be challenging to find such an excellent combination in other locations."

Summarizing the entire assembly, one respondent wrote, "The Assembly 2004 was a 'mountain-top' experience. It seems Winkler 2004 has raised the bar for assemblies to come."—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Winnipeg, Man.

A feast of resources for church workers

The three ministries of Mennonite Church Manitoba offered a banquet of resources to church workers on October 2. A total of 134 people—pastors, teachers, worship leaders, council chairs and others—came to feast on the enticing array of workshops at this year's Equipping Conference, held at Canadian Mennonite University.

Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries, led a series of reflections in the opening worship.

"Our call is to be ambassadors, living here, yet not of here," Voth said. "Ambassadors have no independent authority, only the authority of their sending government.... Ambassadors hear and interpret the values and culture of another government."

Like ambassadors, "do we promote the cultural benefits of God's kingdom?" he asked. The Equipping Conference provided tools for being effective ambassadors.

A workshop on "offering care in situations of abuse and boundary violations" was well attended.

"It was helpful," said one pastor, noting that abuse is far too common. "The attendance indicates the number of people struggling with that issue."

A panel addressed the topic of "family sanity." Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries, guided the discussion. He has discovered that many youth workers are frustrated in their work by a culture that is too programmed and busy.

Joanne Klassen, a counsellor, said that "busy" is an "obscene" word. "It's like a signal: don't expect anything from me."

Glen Klassen, pastor of family ministry in the Winkler Bergtähler Church, gave testament to the need for supports for families. Jarrod Chamberlin, youth pastor at Carman Mennonite Church, explained the shift he has made in his ministry to youth, "trying to create a space where they'll find rest."

Workshops focused on skills for Sunday school teachers, visual art in worship, care giving and many other equipping resources.

Peter Dyck, coordinator of the Chaplaincy Program for MC Manitoba, spoke to a group of care givers who are frustrated with tight restrictions placed on hospital visitation. The Public Health Information Act has since 1997 severely limited the work of church care givers in hospital settings.

At a government hearing in March, Dyck and others were able to highlight the importance of the spiritual needs of the patient. "All other needs of the patient are addressed. Why do we make an exception for spiritual needs?" he asked.

As a result of the hearing, an amendment has been made to the act, encouraging "all facilities to treat Spiritual Care Providers...as integral members of the overall health care team."

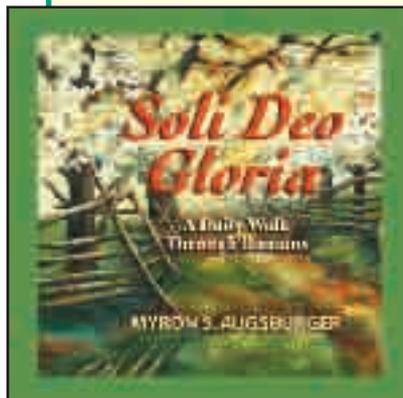
"It will take awhile for all hospitals to implement the change," said Dyck, but it certainly opens the door to religious care givers.—**Evelyn Rempel**

Petkau

News brief

Hymns mask jail break

Singing hymns at the top of their voices helped 10 prisoners in Kenya to break out of their jail cells and escape. The prisoners sang loud enough to drown out the noise of the hacksaw they used to cut through the metal bars of their window in the Machakos police station. "These people really disturbed us as they tried to preach the gospel," said one inmate who was awakened by the singing. The high security prisoners, who were awaiting trial, jumped from the window landing not far from where policemen were sleeping. Their absence was only noted during the roll call later that morning, according to Kenya's *Daily Nation* newspaper. Only one of the fugitives has so far been re-captured.—From BBC news



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Breslau, Ont.

Children get inspiring taste of missions

At Breslau Mennonite Church, children are getting a taste for missions...sometimes literally.

In April, the children had a long-anticipated opportunity to drink from water bottles that they “earned” for their participation in MCC’s Watering New Crops project. It was one of several projects that brought missions front and centre before the Junior Sunday School children.

For several years, Sunday School organizers at Breslau had watched children’s offerings slow to a trickle: most kids would forget their offering and parents frequently asked for help in fostering a sense of stewardship among their children.

While the Children’s Ministry Team was pondering this in 2003, the Missions Committee challenged the Sunday school to involve the children in a mission project of their own.

Missions chair Ted Giesbrecht had seen his teenaged son Matthew experience the call to missions after they travelled to Guatemala together. Matt had been so moved by the plight of the children that he made a commitment to sponsor a child and started a lawnmowing business to raise the money. He also documented the experience in a scrapbook.

Matt shared the scrapbook with the children at church and convinced them that they, too, could make a difference in the world. The children decided to sponsor a boy and a girl through MCC’s Global Families program and designated their offering towards the project. There was an immediate increase in offerings.

The children also painted and sold flowerpots and patio candles towards the project. But it was a tall order for a Sunday School department of less than 30 members—until the mission came local.

Ted had an elderly, shut-in client who hadn’t had a Christmas tree in years. On a December afternoon, an enthusiastic group of youngsters

arrived at Margo’s doorstep with a tree, ornaments and handmade Christmas cards. The children trimmed the tree, sang carols, and enjoyed hot dogs and hot chocolate.

Margo presented the children with a donation that gave a huge boost to their Global Families commitment. At Easter and Christmas, the children made cards for her and for their sponsorship sister and brother in India and Paraguay. Some of the children returned to Margo’s house in the spring with Easter lilies in handpainted pots. Another donation, along with the offerings, allowed the children to make a three-year sponsorship commitment.

That same Christmas, the children joined the congregation in filling shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan’s Purse), and the congregation helped the children raise a bumper crop of hats, scarves, sweaters, socks, and mittens for the MCC Mitten Tree at the front of the sanctuary.

Determined not to lose the momentum, Children’s Ministry chose the MCC Watering New Crops project. The children were encouraged to raise enough money for a well pump—a \$108 target. Organizers provided a steady stream of water-related games and factoids during Sunday School, and tracked their progress by building a “water tower,” with one bottle of water for every \$5 collected.

Meanwhile, member George Fast remembered a wooden “offering box” that had been used years ago by the congregation. He crafted a new box that was placed next to the pulpit, and “children’s offering” became a regular part of the worship service.

The effect far surpassed anyone’s expectations. Offering for children’s projects jumped from two or three dollars a week to an average of fifteen. One boy tithed his birthday money; another girl brought in her piggy bank. They quickly surpassed their goal for the water project and decided

to drill a well to put the pump into—another \$77.

By the time the project ended, this small group of eager souls had raised over \$280 through their offering box, with another \$125 designated by a congregational family.

On “Water Sunday” in mid-April, rows of water bottles lined the front of the sanctuary around the pulpit. The children presented a ceremonial cheque to Harold Dick, MCC Ontario board chair, who spoke to them about how their contribution would help native farmers in Bolivia.

After the service, the children rushed forward to claim a water bottle and drink in their mission success. That has left a good taste in everyone’s mouth.
—Breslau church release

Surrey, B.C.

Sharing building brings congregations together

About eight years ago, Cedar Hills Mennonite Church invited Living Hope Christian Fellowship to share their church building. Living Hope had been meeting in an elementary school and was seeking a more permanent location.

“Unknown to them,” said Living Hope pastor Lorin Bergen, “our leadership had been praying that if God wanted us to move to Cedar Hills, he would cause them to invite us to join them.”

Cedar Hills church was built in 1965. Meeting since 1938, the congregation was formally organized in 1946. But in recent years it has experienced a decline in membership. Ever since Living Hope began sharing the building, the two congregations have been drawn together. On September 5, Cedar Hills Mennonite and Living Hope became one church under the name Living Hope Chris-

Kitchener, Ont.

Young adults seek 'home in a disconnected world'

Young adults from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada gathered at Crieff Hills Camp September 17-19 on the theme "Finding home in a disconnected world." They literally brought home with them, as they decorated the dining room with posters, knickknacks, stuffed animals and other reminders of home.

The questions of the weekend were: What is home? Where do you find home in the midst of transition? What factors of young adult life make finding home difficult?

MaryBeth and Jeff Druery from Open Circle Chaplaincy at McMaster University led the Saturday morning session. They asked us in small groups to list all the things that have changed in our world in the last 20 years. The list was huge, including technology (e-mail, cell phones), political (fall of the Berlin Wall, 9-11), family and marriage, environmental shifts, growing gap between rich and poor.



Photo by Kathy Shantz

Young adults enjoy a turkey dinner at their retreat on "finding home."

What do all these changes mean for us?

Several young adults shared their

experience of trying to find home in their lives. Where is home if you grow up in several different countries? Is church still home when you question its theology and practice? What are we doing to our physical, global home?

We ended the weekend reflecting on finding home in God. Jeremiah told those in exile to seek the welfare of the city, for in its welfare they will find their welfare. The prodigal son finds home again despite all his disconnected wandering. Maybe it is God who finds us, and offers us home, despite our disconnectedness.

The band U2 sings "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Perhaps it is the journey itself that is important. You can carry a sense of being at home with yourself even as you continue the search.—**Mark Diller Harder**

tian Fellowship.

The Cedar Hills congregation had a moving closing service on August 29 to celebrate God's faithfulness in its ministry. Helmut Isaak, retiring pastor, wore a shepherd's headdress which he passed on to Bergen, along with a shepherd's staff, as a symbol of pastoral responsibility.

"This was very meaningful," Bergen says. "Doing such a good job of closing down enabled Cedar Hills people to commit to a new beginning."

Living Hope now has two services, a contemporary service at 9:00 a.m. and a traditional service at 11:00 a.m. Over 100 people attend the traditional service and new people are coming to the earlier one.

Bergen says it is a joy to have seniors in the congregation and he has sensed the joyful welcome of children in the traditional service, something Cedar Hills members had not seen in recent years.

The church building is also home to Surrey Mennonite Church, a Japanese fellowship, which meets at 9:00 a.m. in the basement. Obviously space is an issue, but so far, they have managed. Living Hope currently has two pastoral

staff, Bergen and Jonathan Deng who is responsible for the Mandarin ministry. Translation is offered in both services. Bergen preaches at both services three out of every four weeks, and oversees two children's ministries, worship teams and other ministries.

While the congregation has many lay leaders, the church is now seeking two half-time pastors for student and discipleship ministries.

"I have to focus on my personal boundaries so that my personal and family life continue to be healthy and grow," Bergen says, adding that he has stepped down from his Mennonite Church B.C. role as secretary.

Amid the excitement, Bergen asks the broader church to remember them in prayer.

"The two churches becoming one is a powerful testimony to the unity that there is in Christ," he says. "We have felt what I would call oppression and attacks from Satan in all of this as we know he does not like what is going on. We are bracing ourselves for continued spiritual warfare and prayer is the key weapon."

The two congregations will legally and financially become one in January 2005.

—**Angelika Dawson**

Check out the
Canadian Mennonite web site
www.canadianmennonite.org

CANADIAN
Mennonite

Edmonton, Alta.

Edmonton thrift store celebrates first year

Crackling flames, sizzling hot dogs, and the shuffle of those trying to avoid drifting smoke mingled with conversation and laughter around potluck-laden tables behind First Mennonite Church on the evening of August 25.

The gathering was organized by the Edmonton Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Shop board in honour of the many volunteers who have made the shop a success in its first year of operation.

The store, located in the northern part of the city at 15311 Stony Plain Road, officially opened on May 3, 2003. The store offers a clean, bright shopping atmosphere and a large variety of quality used goods to an appreciative base of customers. The store, however, still faces a number of challenges.

“The two biggest challenges that we continue to face are the recruitment of volunteers and increasing the traffic coming in the front door,” said Marlene Froese, board chair. The board recently purchased advertising in the form of a ValPac coupon to go to area residents.

Froese gleaned some insights at the binational Thrift Shop Network Conference held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. One was the importance of excellent customer service and solid business practices. Like any other business, thrift stores need to earn their customers’ support.

Froese applied this concept to both the front and back doors of the store, noting that donors as well as customers appreciate friendly and efficient service.

“Both deserve our commitment to provide them with a positive experience in coming to Stony Plain Road,” she stressed.

Froese concluded her presentation with a heartfelt thank you to volunteers and a challenge to recruit more people like themselves.

“It is important for people to realize that it does not take a huge commitment. Any time that people can volunteer, no matter how small, is valuable to the work that we do. Often the challenge is to get our church people to come and visit the store.”

—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Volunteers for the Edmonton thrift shop roast wieners at the recent first-anniversary gathering.

Killarney, Man.

‘Altenfest’ celebrated common past

In 1964, the older members of southwestern Manitoba churches decided they needed to gather regularly to remember their heritage. Many had the experience of coming through the Russian Revolution and escaping to Canada. They wanted to praise God and sing the German hymns that sustained them in their darkest moments.

Most of that group is gone, but their children and friends have continued the tradition of an *Altenfest* (celebration by older people). In 1973, the Mennonite Brethren, who had a similar background, joined the event. Eventually 13 congregations took part.

By 1992, there was enough of a generational switch to introduce English; by 1998, no German remained in the program except for some hymns. The event became difficult to sustain—last year saw no program at all.

This year, on September 19, a final

Altenfest at the Killarney Mennonite Church celebrated the 40th anniversary of the event. The format has been that of a worship service, including music groups and reading the names of those who have died in the past year, followed by *Vaspa* (lunch) provided by the host church.

This year featured an orchestra with members drawn from all over southern Manitoba. The musicians had all attended Canadian Sunday School Mission seniors camps. Instruments included violins, mouth organs, guitars, mandolins, banjos and a melodeon, accompanied by a piano. A male choir sang several numbers.

Although this event was billed as a final program, there is interest in carrying on in some form. Whatever the outcome, this program has certainly maintained a sense of special community among the older Mennonites in southwestern Manitoba.—Lorne Brandt

Carman, Man.

Two ordinations celebrated in Manitoba

Ordination is one step on the journey, a step of affirmation, not the end of the journey," says John Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba. In September, he officiated at two ordination services, as well as two installations, in Manitoba congregations.

On September 19, Jarrod Chamberlin's journey toward ordination was celebrated at Carman Mennonite Church.

Four years ago, the congregation, which was struggling to meet its modest budget, decided to hire two pastors instead of one. They recognized a growing need for leadership for their youth and young adults.

While the rural church wrestled with this decision, Jarrod and Sue Chamberlin and their young family, members at Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, wrestled with Jarrod's call to ministry.

For Chamberlin, responding to the call meant giving up a secure job in the manufacturing field to begin a new and untested career. Mennonite Church Manitoba, the Carman church and Chamberlin took their leaps of faith together.

Ed Klassen, who was on the search committee, recalled asking Chamberlin why he wanted to go into ministry. "Jarrod said, 'The fire doesn't go out.' When we do God's will the resources are always there," said Klassen.

Ken Quiring recalled Chamberlin's early years in the North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, Saskatchewan. Gary Martens, pastor at Steinbach Mennonite Church, remembered that as pastor of Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, he found in Chamberlin the aptitude, interest and "energy galore" for ministry.

That interest took Chamberlin to Canadian Mennonite Bible College, but after one year, he set studies aside to take up a job.

"So when Carman called you, your gifts were fanned to flame again," said Martens. "God places in us pastors a sense of hope which doesn't make

sense to everyone."

Norm Voth, the Chamberlins' pastor at Sterling Mennonite, recalled the death of their infant son and other markers along the journey, "the pool of resources out of which you minister."

Bob Pauls, senior pastor at Carman, noted that Chamberlin's journey over the past four years went from "a sense of being empowered by God's call to a time of doubt and questioning. You have come through these times with a deeper and more profound sense of vision and calling."

On September 26, Kathy Koop was ordained at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

"For me," said Koop, "it is an acceptance of the affirmation of the congregation."

Koop began as associate pastor of First Mennonite two years ago. Initially hired to give leadership to the contemporary worship service, the church is also making use of Koop's other gifts.

Growing up in Germany, the daughter of a Mennonite minister there, Koop has fluency in the German language. She and her husband Karl worked with Mennonite Central Committee for four years with the *Aussiedler* (recent immigrants from Russia) and other Mennonites in Germany. She has been chaplain in the Vineland United Mennonite Home for the Aged and a youth pastor at St. Catharine's United Mennonite Church.

These experiences, along with studies at the Mennonite Bible school in Switzerland, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and a degree in nursing, have given her skills that extend her ministry to the elderly as well.

"I enjoy relating to younger families and to the women," said Koop, who is



John P. Klassen, left, officiates at the ordination of Jarrod Chamberlin at Carman Mennonite Church. With Jarrod is his wife, Sue.

Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

the mother of four daughters, "but I also enjoy relating to the older people. My involvement with them came about by default because I speak German and because of my experience of relating to others who have walked a similar path to them."

"One of the best experiences so far has been the opportunity to participate in so many different congregations with each move we have made. I have seen how people really take seriously the call to discipleship in different contexts and in different ways. There is not one single way of being faithful to God."

When First Mennonite asked Koop to be ordained, "I didn't hesitate," she said. "I felt strong affirmation from the congregation.... Throughout life I have seen God leading me to work in the church."—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Listowel, Ont.

Sister congregations bridge two worlds

Listowel, Ontario and Kotoura, Burkina Faso, are worlds apart. Yet, the Mennonite congregations in these places have been nurturing a “sister congregation” relationship that is building bridges between the two communities.

According to Fred Lichti, Listowel Mennonite Church pastor, this relationship began when Mennonite Church Canada promoted the idea of partner churches across Canada. MC Canada Witness was also suggesting partnerships with congregations in other parts of the world.

In 2001, Anne and Daniel became associate members at Listowel Mennonite. They presented the congregation with an embroidered communion cloth depicting the Lord’s Supper with people in African dress. The same year, Anne was credentialled by the Leadership Commission of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and the Listowel church for her ministry in Burkina Faso.

Each time the Listowel church celebrates communion, the gift cloth is a visible reminder of their unity in Christ and special relationship with

baptized at Listowel this past summer.

On the day of the baptism in Kotoura, members in Listowel gathered for a morning prayer service, thus linking the two congregations. To honour the baptism commitments, Listowel sent one of their favourite worship banners along with Peter Rempel of Mennonite Church Canada Witness. He will report back to Listowel on his conversations with the Kotoura congregation.

In the dreaming stage is the possibility of Listowel sending a short-term service team to Burkina Faso, or perhaps money for a delegation to visit Ontario.—**Maurice Martin**



Photo by Leonard W. Garber

This communion cloth was sent to Listowel Mennonite Church from the congregation in Burkino Faso.

“Rather than reach out to a church with whom we had no prior links, it seemed better for us to connect with the church in Burkina Faso, because we already had a natural link through Anne Garber.”

In 1983, Anne Garber began work as a missionary linguist in Burkina Faso. In her first assignment she lived in Kotoura, a rural community. In addition to learning the “Sicite” language, she and her co-workers were led to plant a Mennonite church in Kotoura (see related story).

In 1993, Anne married Daniel Kompaore, a minister and director of the Bible Society in Burkina Faso. They moved to the capital city Ouagadougou where Anne continues to work in Bible translation.

African believers. The two congregations also exchange letters and prayer requests.

This summer Ezekiel Maadou Traore, pastor from Kotoura, invited representatives from Listowel to attend a baptism service in Burkina Faso. Cost and time restraints prohibited the Canadians from attending, but Daniel Kompaore represented the Ontario congregation at the service.

In a letter of greeting, Listowel members said: “The news of 32 baptisms in your congregation is amazing!... Our faith in the power of the gospel has been strengthened because of the way the Lord has touched the hearts and changed the lives of so many persons in your community.” The letter noted that three people were

Elkhart, Ind.

How God built a church in Kotoura

Anne Garber and Gail Wiebe arrived in the village of Kotoura, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), in 1982. They prayed that God’s spirit would prepare the villagers’ hearts to receive the message of God’s love.

“We also asked for one person to search for truth,” Garber said.

“The village people did not expect us to stay long.... they just did not think that two white women would be able to endure [their] lifestyle and diet.”

The villagers were amazed to find white people interested in them and their language. “They were even more amazed when we asked the chief for land to build a house on.”

The chief assigned his 24-year-old son, Tiéba, to “supervise” the two North American women. During one of Tiéba’s visits, he picked up a French book and began falteringly to read the story of the prodigal son. When he had finished, Tiéba exclaimed, “Wow! What a wonderful story. Tell me more and I’ll tell others.”

Within two weeks of the Mennonite women’s arrival among one of Burkina Faso’s most traditional ethnic groups, renowned for their powerful sorcery, God’s word began to take root. Within

Winnipeg, Man.

Quest for healing in Thailand

Pat and Rad Houmphan have many stories about the quest for healing and wholeness in Thailand. The Houmphans are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Borabur with the Isaan people.

They are currently on a year of ministry leave in Vancouver where Pat is itinerating and studying.

"More than three years ago, the Lord led us to Borabur to start [a] church planting ministry," says Pat. "We began the first Sunday with two believers." Today the church has 60 people who regularly attend.

Scattered among these new believers are poignant stories of faith. There is Pae, an alcoholic whose marriage to Sone was breaking down. Prasane, a Christian, disliked Pae but wanted to share the Good News with him, so he

invited Pae to the Christmas celebration at church.

Everyone who came participated in a gift draw, and Pae received a box of noodles. Pae was asking God to let him get it, he told Prasane. This simple answer to prayer proved to Pae that "there must be a God because he knows about [my] needs."

Subsequent ministry visits with Pae did not give sceptical fellow villagers any hope that he could break his alcohol addiction. But change he did.

Pat reports that Pae has become "a new person. He is no longer drinking. He is well dressed....he has peace and joy." His wife, Sone, was amazed at the change and began seeking the Lord as well. They stopped quarreling and have become more loving toward each other. People in their village are

amazed at their change.

Trissadee is an elementary school teacher and the first civil servant to become a Christian in Borabur. Her road to faith was a cautious, one-year journey. At her baptism, Trissadee testified of a new happiness and peace in her life, praising God for having overcome recurring laryngitis.

Pat says, "We have seen Trissadee grow steadily in her spiritual life.... She feels the burden to help out with the church activities, to do more evangelism, to share God's wonderful story among her families, neighbours, and her friends at school."

The Houmphans praise God for the results of their ministry among the Isaan. The congregation has outgrown its rented space and has since decided to acquire land and build a meeting place.

"It's a big challenge, but we trust in God's leading," said Pat.—From MC Canada release

a year, Tiéba gave his life to Christ.

"He became quite the evangelist and soon brought in a group of seven friends," said Garber Kompaoré (she later married Daniel Kompaoré).

Tiéba and his friends had an insatiable desire to learn to read so they could understand more about God. After working all day in their fields, the young men would come to

the mission workers' home to read biblical portions. Their enthusiasm often exhausted their Mennonite mentors.

"We had to insist they stop at 10 p.m. so we could get some sleep," Garber Kompaoré said. "They had us preaching four nights each week.... We were looking at a time frame measured in years before anticipating conversions, but God had other plans. The first convert came before the Bible even began to be translated."

The church quickly faced opposition. The young believers struggled to find ways to show respect to their families without supporting ancestor worship and animal sacrifice.

Ten years after her arrival in Kotoura, Garber Kompaoré moved to the capital



Garber Kompaoré

city to join her husband. The Kotoura church, under local leadership, continued to experience growing pains.

A major blow came in 1994. Tiéba died at the age of 36, leaving two wives and eight children. Many believers returned to traditional ways.

Today the congregation and two congregations that have grown up in surrounding villages have a vibrant Christian witness. In September, they baptized 32 people.

Garber Kompaoré, equally at home in a mud-brick courtyard or in an academic ivory tower, often does something "because no one else is doing it." That is her motivation for the master's thesis she is writing at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on discourse analysis of biblical law.

"Mosaic law may seem to be the driest part of the Bible," Garber Kompaoré said, "but it's hard to say in a few words how it affects me." After a six-month study leave, she returns to Burkina Faso in December.

For the past seven years, she has been seconded to Wycliffe Bible Translators as a linguistic coordinator working with more than 20 of the country's 60 languages. Upon her return, she will serve as a United Bible Societies translation consultant.—From MC Canada release by **Lynda Hollinger-Janzen**

Hebron, Israel/Palestine

CPTers severely beaten

Three Christian Peacemaker Team workers have been attacked by Israeli settlers recently.

Kim Lamberty and Chris Brown, both from the United States, were attacked by settlers as they accompanied Palestinian children to school on September 29. Five settlers wearing masks attacked Brown and Lamberty with a chain and bat, leaving Brown with broken ribs, a punctured lung and a contusion to his temple.

Lamberty received a broken arm and a damaged knee. The attackers also took her passport, money and phone. Both were treated in an Israeli hospital. The children were not injured.

On October 9, eight settlers armed with wooden sticks and sling shots attached Diane Janzen of Calgary and her colleagues who had also been accompanying children to protect them from harassment. Janzen was bruised and another worker had his arm broken.

Articles about the attack have said only that Brown and Lamberty "claim" that their attackers were Israeli settlers, although the BBC headlined the story, "Jewish settlers 'attack' US workers." Israeli police said the attack was a robbery.—From CPT release

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Akron, Pa.—Mark and Mary Oxley of Shropshire, England, are the first workers to serve in Sri Lanka under Mennonite Central Committee. Mark, who worked as a dairy herd manager in England, will help develop a dairy project to increase milk production. Most dairy products in Sri Lanka are imported and expensive. The Oxleys will work with Y Gro, an organization which offers agricultural training and development projects. The couple and their two children left for Sri Lanka (just south of India) on September 9.
 —From MCC release

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Albrecht—to Vicki and Richard, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a son, Christian James, July 22.
Braun—to Tara and Andrew, Morden Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Leah Carmelle, Sept. 16.
Davies—to Jamie Saffa and Shedrack, First Mennonite, Edmonton, a daughter, Felicia, Sept. 11.
Dominguez—to Cecilia Ayala and Rafael, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a son, Benjamin Antonio, June 24.
Epp—to Jane and Brad, First Mennonite, Edmonton, a son, Grayson Brody, Aug. 24.
Klassen—to Tracey and John, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a son, Isaac John, July 18.
Nelson—to Erica and Dan, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Kyla Lauren, Oct. 1.
Siler—to Tanya and Charlie of Morden, Man., Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Charli Amajja, Sept. 23.

Marriages

Bartel-Innes—Rob and Reagan, First Mennonite, Edmonton, July 31.
Cook-Pellegrini—Colin and Jean, Stirling Avenue

People & Events

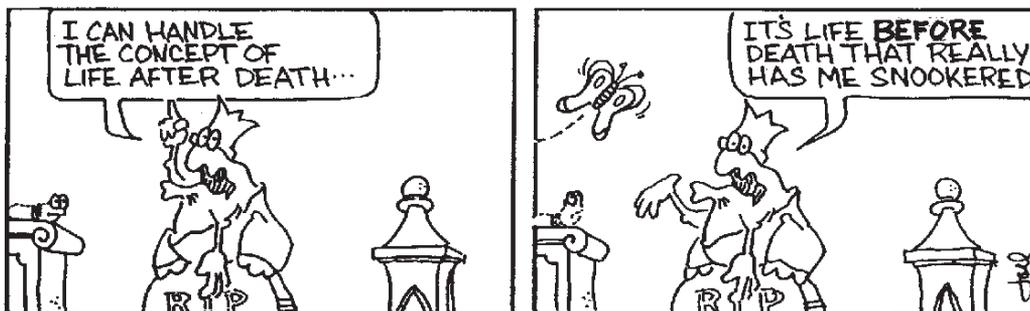
Service tour to Jamaica

TourMagination is offering a Service Tour to Jamaica from January 21-30, led by Dave Worth, Mennonite Central Committee's director of Constituency Ministries. Worth has worked in Jamaica for Habitat for Humanity Canada and also with MCC. The group will be working with the Mennonite Church of

Jamaica, MCC and Habitat to assist with hurricane recovery. Three persons who participated in TourMagination's service tour in 2004 are already committed to return in January to help Jamaicans rebuild their lives. To register for this service tour, call 1-800-565-0451 or (519) 885-2522, or e-mail: office@tourmagination.com.
 —From TourMagination release

St. Catharines, Ont.—In mid-August, the St. Catharines United Mennonite Church held a farewell lunch for its leading pastor, Ben Wiebe. During his three-year term, Wiebe began several new care groups and established regular Bible classes. His wife, Patti Wiebe, was involved in many aspects of church life, especially the music programs. Wiebe was a true shepherd.
 —From report by **Henry Hildebrandt**

Pontius' Puddle



Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Aug. 28.

Dyck-Buhler—Randy (Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Loretta, in Winkler, Sept. 11.

Fortin-Steinmann—Eric (Catholic church) and Krista, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Sept. 25.

Fraser-Heinrichs—Steven and Ellen, First Mennonite, Calgary, Aug. 14.

Hamilton-Schumm—Steven (United Church) and Amy, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., at bride's home, Aug. 21.

Hildebrand-Peters—Cam and Annie, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 3.

Neufeld-Wall—Sheldon and Jennifer, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 24.

Pendoniquott-Murdoch—Ben and Lindsay (Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.) in Lakefield, Ont., Aug. 21.

Reimer-Kleiner—Frank and

Margaret, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 14.

Penner-Peters—Michael and Marge, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Oct. 1.

Roney-Klassen—Glen and Sharon, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sept. 25.

Schwartzentruber-Gingerich—Don and Joanne, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., July 24.

Shantz-Neill—Kevin and Laura, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Oct. 2.

Stockdale-Leis—Gregg (United Church) and Jennifer, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Sept. 18.

Wideman-Brooks—Eric and Pamela, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., at Ingersoll Christian Reformed, Ont., Oct. 9.

Wiebe-Lindenberg—Stephan (Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.) and Kalyn, at Camp Elim, Sask., Aug. 28.

Deaths

Bartel—Hanna, 97, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., Sept. 15.

Dyck—Jacob, 92, Clearbrook Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Sept. 24.

Goertzen—Olga, 83, of Abbotsford, B.C., Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., Sept. 15.

Harder—Anna, 92, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 5.

Isaac—Jack, 83, of Winnipeg, Morden Mennonite, Man., June 28.

Krahn—Katharina, 79, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., Sept. 26.

Loewen—Annie, 96, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 3.

Nickel—Cornie, 76, Morden Mennonite Man., Sept. 28.

Poetker—Donna, 63, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Sept. 27.

Rohr—Edward, 78, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Sept. 16.

Snyder—Erma L., 94, Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 5.

Warkentin—John, 87, of Abbotsford, B.C., Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Sept. 11.

Wiebe—Jakob, 84, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 21.

Zacharias—Agnes, 85, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Sept. 26.

Baptisms

Steinbach Mennonite, Man.—Wesley Hildebrand, Jason Krause, Oct. 3.

Stirling Avenue, Kitchener, Ont.—Kim Bechtel, Kevin Martin, Lindsay Shantz and Steve Wilhelm, June 13.

Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.—Stephan Wiebe, Aug. 22.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes transitions announcements within four months of the event. When sending by e-mail, please identify congregation (name and location).



Work is progressing on a church building for this new congregation in North Canton, Ohio, thanks in part to a grant from the JoinHands Mennonite Church Building Program.



A place to worship

Because of your gifts, congregations such as the Dayspring Christian Fellowship in North Canton, Ohio, receive needed funds for church buildings. Through the JoinHands (formerly Tenth Man) church-building program, you can support the mission of new Mennonite congregations in Canada, the United States and around the world.

Yes, I want to help build meetinghouses for new Mennonite congregations.

- Send me more information.
- I'm willing to give \$100 twice per year. Sign me up.
- Call me with needs for volunteer labor.

Name _____

Street or Box _____

City _____ Prov. ____ Code _____

Congregation _____

Return to Marvin Baergen, 67 Millrise Drive, SW, Calgary, AB T2Y 2C6.

Mennonite Church Canada

Inviting suggestions and prayers

The Nominating Committee for Mennonite Church Canada is looking for people to serve on the General Board, Christian Formation Council, Christian Witness Council and Support Services Council. It also forwards suggestions for various other committees and boards within the MC Canada structure.

The Nominating Committee is meeting in Winnipeg on November 5 to begin the discernment process. Please pray for the committee as it strives to find persons with the best skills while ensuring a balance of gender, age, geography, and ethnicity.

You are also invited to participate in this process by making suggestions to the committee. Forward sugges-

tions by e-mail to: nominations@mennonitechurch.ca. For more details visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/leadership, or call 1-866-888-6785, ext. 132.—MC Canada release

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Pastors talk about money

On October 7, 18 pastors met at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church to talk about money. It is a sensitive issue around which pastors tend to step lightly. Yet one out of six sayings of Jesus have to do with money and our attitudes toward it. And pastors feel called to teach their congregants about stewardship.

As the poster on the wall declared: "If pastors don't claim their priestly role in this, someone else will."

After a panel discussion, participants gathered into small groups to share their own "money autobiography." They were invited to reflect on several questions: Who were your money management role models when you were a child or youth? Was money discussed in your family? If so, what were your reactions? If not, what did the silence around money matters reflect?

The pastors then talked about their current views of money. Questions included: With whom do you feel comfortable discussing your own finances? Do you approach your relationship with money from an abundance or a scarcity mentality? Has money ever hindered a relationship? How do you determine how much money you will give to your congregation or to other causes?

The meeting was convened by Jeff Steckley, Giving Project Consultant Coordinator of MCEC, and Mike Strathdee

and Darren Pries-Klassen of Mennonite Foundation. The goal was to help pastors reflect on how their relationship with money affects how they minister in the congregation on such matters.

The kind of discussion these pastors had would translate well into congregational settings such as small groups or Sunday School classes.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Camping program looking at history

Camps with Meaning, the outdoor ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba, is collecting historical information on the camping programs at Assiniboia, Koinonia and Moose Lake.

People are invited to share information, documents, stories, recollections or photos. Contact the camps office at

Hearing from vibrant rural churches

Saskatchewan boasts more roads and larger spaces between farms than other provinces. Shrinking rural communities have provided new challenge and renewed energy to Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations.

MC Saskatchewan's Ministries Commission commissioned Eric Olfert and Naomi Unger to listen to people from 10 of the smallest rural churches. They discovered that vibrancy has less to do with frequency of meeting and bulging church walls than with committed church people and God's grace.

People's spiritual lives flourish as they make an obvious difference in their community.

One of the gifts of a small congregation is that everyone needs to be involved. One of the smallest churches visited was Horse Lake. Its 20 members all participate in the services, both at church and in the care home nearby.

The congregation at Superb produces musical dramas, including "Wheat Belt

Gospel" and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat." As congregational numbers decline, those participating in church work represent an increasingly broad age group. Members drawn into these energizing and meaningful experiences grow in their abilities and faith.

In communities where the Mennonite church is the only remaining congregation, interdenominational worship and work experience different levels of success. In some places, all it takes is one person from another faith background to attend a service and find a welcome. Other areas still struggle with historical differences.

But frequently, Mennonite pastors serve as "community chaplains" for families with little church connection. "Recycling-through-quilting" projects continue to be meaningful interdenominational community activities.

Sharing pastors is a life-giving way to meet the needs of rural congregations.

From our leaders

This kind of an arrangement allows members at Herschel and Fiske to reach out to their neighbours through community-based, church-connected projects such as youth work, a mom's group, and community education events.

Serving people creates its own vibrancy. Each church is developing unique gifts.

Naomi and Eric are preparing a study guide for all churches, including urban ones. They pose questions to help church members to reflect on how God is at work in their community, and how they can join in and stay vibrant in that work.

For more information contact Vibrant Rural Churches Project, e-mail: mcsask@mcsask.ca.

*Claire Ewert Fisher,
Ministries Commission,
MC Saskatchewan*



(204) 895-2267 or e-mail: camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Chaplaincy office welcomes students

The Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association (IMCA) is a joint ministry of four Manitoba conferences: Evangelical Mennonite Church, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church, Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Brethren conference. It also receives support from congregations and individuals.

Located in the University Centre of the University of Manitoba, the Mennonite chaplain's office serves as a gathering place for informal fellowship, discussions and worship. It offers a quiet place for meditation or study, a setting for counselling, and a place to find information on congregations, conferences and church-related organizations like MCC.

Mark von Kampen, current chaplain, says, "Much of my time is spent with groups of students and my energy focused on relationship and community building. More often than not, issues of faith come up spontaneously during our conversations."

Last year, the chaplaincy office hosted a weekly forum on Anabaptist faith, using the four church confessions of faith as a springboard.

One student said, "The office provides valuable information and contacts for church related activities. It's a great place to ask questions, discuss issues, meet friendly people and get ideas."

The office is open Tuesday mornings, and Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

New pastors begin assignments

There are several new faces emerging in Saskatchewan churches this fall as congrega-

tions fill pastoral positions.

In Osler Mennonite Church, Gordon Allaby began on August 1 as lead pastor. There will be a profile on Allaby in an upcoming issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

Jeff Siemens was hired September 1 as half-time youth pastor at Hague Mennonite Church.

Upcoming celebrations in Saskatchewan

Camp Elim, one of three conference camps in Saskatchewan, will be celebrating its 60th year of operation at the beginning of the next camping season. June 25-26 has been set aside for this event.

Grace Mennonite church in Regina will also be celebrating its 50th anniversary on July 23-24.

In a statement from the church, Tony Nickel detailed the following information about the festivities.

"Grace Mennonite Church community would like to invite all past and present participants to come and celebrate a history of how an urban church in a non-Mennonite community grew to maturity in learning and understanding what it means to live and worship, individually and corporately, under the reign of God."

A book capturing historical events in anecdotes and pictures is being prepared. Storytelling, dramas, power-point presentations, music and food will all be part of the anniversary celebrations. "And all will be done with a distinct multi-cultural flavour, for that is who we have become," said the statement.

Mennonite Church Alberta

'Uplifting experience' in two congregations!

The Bergthal Mennonite Church near Didsbury, and Edmonton's First Mennonite Church are currently install-

ing elevators to improve the accessibility of their buildings.

When Bergthal completed a major building addition and renovation three years ago, an elevator was not included. At a spring 2004 congregational meeting, the decision was made to go ahead with the addition of an elevator to allow handicapped access to all three levels of the building.

First Mennonite Church built an elevator shaft into its new building in 1997. However, due to the expense, installation of the elevator was postponed.

The elevator installation began at the end of September. First, like Bergthal, runs most of its Sunday School classes out of the basement, and the elevator will make it possible for all participants to use the classrooms.

Trinity Mennonite ready to build

On October 24, Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary celebrates its future home with a sod-turning ceremony on the 11-acre property the church has purchased just south of Calgary city limits. The celebration has been long in coming.

The congregation experienced a frustrating setback when a site amendment proved impossible to obtain at the first property the group had purchased. The original 16-acre piece of land was resold, and the 11-acre location purchased.

On April 22, the church received the go-ahead from the Municipal District of Foothills. The congregation now awaits final architectural drawings and building permits. Building may begin as early as November. The congregation hopes to begin using its new building by summertime.

For many years, the Trinity congregation rented space from the Covenant Christian Reformed Church in southwest Calgary. In 2003, the congregation began meeting there on Saturday evenings, because

the Covenant congregation required all the Sunday morning time and space.

This proved to be difficult for many participants, especially families with small children.

Since September 2004, the congregation has been meeting at the Menno Simons Christian School. Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 11:00 a.m.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Youth retreat

The Youth Impact Retreat will run November 19-21 at Camp Squeah. Speakers are Brad and Shauna Hiebert from Winkler, Manitoba. The will speak on "Real life, real choices, real Jesus." Information and registration forms are available from all MCBC youth pastors or sponsors.

Annual sessions moved to February

The Mennonite Church British Columbia annual session has been moved from late spring to winter and will take place in February in Vancouver. The Nominations Committee is still searching for volunteers to fill roles left vacant at the last annual meeting in June.

Volunteers are needed for the Finance, Evangelism and Church Development, Nominations, and Program committees, and to represent MCBC at Columbia Bible College. Interested people should contact Mary Woelk at (604) 853 2170 or e-mail: mwwoelk@telus.net.

Unless otherwise credited, articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (Mennonite Church Canada), Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Pethau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta), Angelika Dawson (B.C.). See page 2 for contact information.

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 at: mci@mcce.ca or mci@mcce.net

School notes

Enrolment at CMU

Winnipeg, Man.—Canadian Mennonite University is experiencing a record enrolment this fall. Overall, more than 1,700 students are registered for courses at CMU for a full-time equivalency (FTE) of over 900. A total of 442 students are registered at the main campus, 371 of them full time, an 11 percent increase over last year. There is a 19 percent increase in first-year students: 197 this fall, compared to 165 last year. At Menno Simons College, a college of CMU located on the University of Winnipeg campus, more than 1,200 student are registered for courses in Conflict Resolution or International Development Studies. In addition, 91 students are participating in Outtatown, CMU's international program that has sites in Guatemala, South Africa and Thailand. CMU was granted university status by the Province of Manitoba in 1998.—From CMU release

Bluffton now university

Bluffton, Ohio—Bluffton College changed its name to Bluffton University on August 1. The change is based on "a practical desire to communicate better what Bluffton has become," said Morris Stutzman, chair of the board. "While undergraduate programs... remain at its core, non-traditional and graduate programs have been added." Affiliated with Mennonite Church USA, the school was founded in 1899. It has an enrolment of 1,100 students. Bluffton is the third U.S. Mennonite college to become a university, following Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, and Fresno Pacific University in California.—From *Mennonite Weekly Review*

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 grebel.uwaterloo.ca

Employment opportunities

VOLUNTEER DIRECTORS Mennonite Centre in Ukraine

The Mennonite Centre, located in a restored former girls school in Halbstadt, Molochna, specializes in medical and educational programs and acts as a learning centre. We are forming an ongoing team of several retired or semi-retired volunteer couples, each spending 3 to 4 months a year in Ukraine. We are looking for men and women who can model professional leadership and management roles. Knowledge of German is very helpful, as is some familiarity with Russian. For more information contact:

Walter Unger
Phone: (416) 925-9461; E-mail: walterunger@ica.net

Abbeydale Christian Fellowship (ACF) Church of Calgary is seeking a

LEAD PASTOR

with strengths in preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Duties would also include mentoring lay leadership. ACF is a medium sized congregation (170-200) in east Calgary seeking to disciple members and attendees, encourage their gifts and involvement in the church, and to reach out to the neighbourhood and families of church adherents. ACF is part of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

Please submit resumes in confidence by December 1, 2004:

E-mail: SearchCommittee@Abbeydale.org



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
is accepting applications for the position of

MCC CENTRAL STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States.

Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills, and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact:

Charmayne Brubaker
Phone: (717) 859-1151; E-mail: cdb@mcc.org
or your nearest MCC office for the full job description.

Application review begins immediately. Position available January 1, 2005 or sooner, if possible.

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors and the Executive Director have announced an applicant search for the position of

ACADEMIC PRINCIPAL

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities.

The application deadline is December 15. For information:

Phone: 1-866-343-9378
E-mail: wmsoffice@teleport.com

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate seeks to fill the position of

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

The successful candidate will be responsible for administrative and secretarial support to the Principal and Assistant Principal, assume responsibility for curricular and Ministry of Education documentation, as well as leadership within the school's office support staff. The position demands excellent organizational and secretarial skills; an ability to multi-task; and exceptional computer and inter-personal skills. The successful candidate should be an active member of a Mennonite congregation and have a commitment to Christian education from a Mennonite Anabaptist perspective.

A position description is available at

www.rockway.on.ca/hiring.html

Please forward resume by November 1, 2004

c/o Principal, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
110 Doon Road, Kitchener, ON N2G 3C8
Fax: (519)743-5935
E-mail: principal@rockway.on.ca

Housing

Looking to house sit in Saskatoon or area for the winter months. Young, mature couple. Phone (306) 223-4237.



These Canadians are among the 53 young people in the one-year SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program of Mennonite Central Committee. From left front: Helen Bergen, Aylmer, Ont., is working with the Low German program in Bolivia; Cindy Low, Borden, Sask., is in Thailand; Rachel Bremer, Lethbridge, Alta., is serving in day care in Bolivia; Jill Lees, Oak Lake, Man., is in Indonesia. Second row: Darren Stauffer, Tofield, Alta., is teaching English in Uganda; Heather Burkholder, Markham, Ont., is working in Zimbabwe; Tessa Callan, Winnipeg, is working in conflict resolution in Jamaica; Rachel Vermeer, Lethbridge, Alta., is teaching in South Korea; Ruth Doerfler, Marston, Que., is in Brazil. Third row: Anthony Bolton, Crooked Creek, Alta., is working in Jamaica; John Harback, Kitchener, Ont., is in Egypt; Charles Koop, Winkler, Man., is working with children in Bolivia; Karen Hough, Napanee, Ont., is in Brazil; Amy Goerzen, Tofield, Alta., is working with children in Ukraine; Lisa Wikkerink, Abbotsford, B. C., is working with children in Jamaica; Stephen Deunk, Leduc, Alta., is in Indonesia; Jessica Jantzi, Wellesley, Ont., works with children in Bolivia.—From MCC release

FIDA responds to Haiti's distress

Waterloo, Ont.—The Foundation for International Development Assistance (FIDA) is responding to the devastation in Haiti caused by Hurricane Jeanne. It is providing support to families affected by this crisis and is committed to long-term preventative solutions.

Health concerns are rapidly rising due to contaminated water and dead bodies. Security measures have been largely ineffective against the looting of relief supplies by desperate residents. Gonaives is the area worst hit, with the death toll now over 1,500.

FIDA has been in Haiti since 1984, providing resources to rural communities. Executive director of FIDA is Betsy

Wall; board chair is Willard Metzger. Donations can be sent to 155 Frobisher Drive, Unit H-109, Waterloo, ON N2V 2C9. For further information, call (519) 886-9520.—From FIDA release

MCC sending aid to Florida

Akron, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee is providing 25,000 cans of meat to Florida and southern Alabama. Florida has been hit by four hurricanes since August.

Hispanic and Haitian Mennonite congregations in Florida are distributing 4,000 cans of meat and 100 grocery bags of food donated by Amish and Mennonite communities in Sarasota.—From MCC release

Calendar

British Columbia

October 28: Dedication of Columbia Bible College Student Centre, Abbotsford, 6:30 p.m. Open house at 5:00 p.m.

October 29, 30: Mennonite Disaster Service information evenings, at King Road MB Church, Abbotsford (29), First United Mennonite, Vancouver (30), 7:00 p.m. Speakers include Gerry Klassen and Karen Midland.

November 6: MCC B.C. annual meeting at Yarrow Mennonite Brethren Church.

November 19-21: MC British Columbia Youth Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah.

December 4, 5: Abendmusik Advent Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (4), Knox United Church, Vancouver (5), 8:00 p.m.

February 25: MC British Columbia LEAD Conference at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

February 26: Mennonite Church British Columbia annual sessions at First Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

March 19, 20: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (19), Knox United Church, Vancouver (20), 8:00 p.m.

Alberta

October 24: Sod-turning for Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, 3:00 p.m.

October 30: Annual auction at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, 9:30 a.m. Lunch available.

November 5: Peace Festival at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

January 21-23: Junior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 25-27: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

Saskatchewan

October 29-30: Missional church workshop for lay leaders, "Being a church that makes a difference," at Youth Farm Bible Camp, Rosthern.

October 31, Nov. 7, 14, 21: Workshop on Dead Sea Scrolls with Vern Ratzlaff at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, 7:00 p.m.

November 1: Fundraising supper by Rosthern Junior College Auxiliary at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

November 5-6: MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting. Saturday sessions at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

November 5-7: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah.

November 12-13: Music Fest at Zoar Mennonite Church, Waldheim.

November 13-14: Musical, "Pull of the land," at Rosthern Junior College. Fundraiser for Mennonite Heritage Museum.

November 20: Genealogy Day, sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon. Phone (306) 945-2217.

December 22: Rosthern Junior College Christmas concert, 7:00 p.m.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

June 25-26: Camp Elim celebrates 60 years.

July 23-24: 50th anniversary celebrations at Grace Mennonite Church in Regina.

Manitoba

October 29, November 4, 9: Eden Foundation banquets, with music by East Kildonan Mennonite Church Quartet, at Steinbach Mennonite Church (29), Douglas Mennonite (4), Winkler Berghthaler (9), 6:30 p.m. Call (204) 325-5355.



New kitchen for MDS volunteers

Akron, Pa.—This mobile kitchen was custom-built for Mennonite Disaster Service recently to serve volunteers helping in hurricane cleanup in Arcadia, Florida.

M. H. Eby, Inc., of Blue Ball, Pennsylvania, offered to build the kitchen trailer as a donation to help hurricane victims. Employees volunteered their time to complete the project in a very short time. Haller Enterprises of Lititz, Pa., volunteered its services to install electricity, plumbing, heat and air-conditioning. The custom cabinets came from E. H. Woodworking.

Hard hit near Arcadia was the "Sunnybreeze" development, begun by Mennonites from Ontario over 40 years ago. Sunnybreeze was directly in the path of Hurricane Charley.—From MDS and other releases

October 30: Canadian Mennonite University fundraising dessert evening at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

October 30: Camps with Meaning Celebration Banquet at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, 6:00 p.m.

October 30, November 6: Seminar on worship planning and leading with Irma Fast Dueck, Graysville Mennonite Church (Oct. 30), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg (Nov. 6).

November 1: Annual meeting of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m.

November 3: Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association annual meeting at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.

November 5-7: Quilting retreats at Camp Koinonia (with speaker Tina Hildebrand) and Camp Moose Lake (leader Val Pankratz).

November 6: Camps with Meaning Celebration Banquet at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 6:00 p.m.

November 7: Camps with Meaning Celebration Banquet at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 5:00 p.m.

November 12-14: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake with speaker Debbie Hopkins. Call (204) 896-1616.

November 20: 23rd annual Volleyball Tournament in Steinbach, beginning with worship at Grace Mennonite, 8:45 a.m. To register, phone (204) 896-1616, e-mail: office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

November 24: Evening with the Arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m.

November 28: Opening concert at Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

December 9, 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas programs, 7:00 p.m. Aggasiz at Bethel Mennonite Church (9); Bedson at Immanuel Pentecostal (16).

December 11: Advent concert by NKMC Quartet at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

December 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

January 20-22: Refreshing Winds, biennial conference on worship and music, at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.

Ontario

October 25: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union meeting on proposed investment, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

October 30: Christian Officers Peace Seminar II at Conrad Grebel University College.

November 3-6: Ten Thousand Villages Festival Sale at Vineland United Mennonite Church, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Saturday to 3:00 p.m.).

November 5-7: MCEC Youth Exchange Weekend.

November 6: Lay leadership training by SAFARI at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

November 6: Alumni reunion (1964-70) at Conrad Grebel University College, 6:00 p.m.

November 11-13: "Cotton Patch Gospel" musical at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate.

November 14: 180th anniversary service and fellowship meal at St. Agatha Mennonite Church, 10:00 a.m. Speaker: John Ruth.

November 15: TourMagination Open House at 225 Forsyth Dr., Waterloo, with John and Roma Ruth, tour leaders, 7:00 p.m.

November 18: MEDA Waterloo breakfast meeting at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Faith Morphy (Young Drivers of Canada).

November 20: Fundraiser evening of music and storytelling for the Visitor Centre, at St. Jacobs Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

November 21: Junior Youth Breakaway at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, 10:00 a.m.

November 23-27: Ten Thousand Villages Sale, Old

Town Hall, Aylmer. Call (519) 765-3020.

November 26-28: Ten Thousand Villages Mennonite Christmas Festival at Harbourfront Centre, Toronto.

November 27: Faith and Law seminar at Conrad Grebel University College.

December 4, 5: Christmas concert by Pax Christi Chorale at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 8:00 p.m. (Sat.), 3:00 p.m. (Sun.). Call (416) 494-7889.

December 16: Christmas concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

United States

November 4-7: MEDA convention at Westin Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. Theme: Risky business. Call (717) 560-6546, e-mail: wcoleman@meda.org.

July 4-9: Charlotte 2005, joint Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada assembly, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

To list events in the calendar, phone:

1-800-378-2524

or e-mail:

editor@canadianmennonite.org

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Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org



Get ready for Charlotte 2005!

Charlotte 2005 will be a joint assembly of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA on July 4-9 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

About 10,000 Mennonites are expected at the gathering, which will include adult delegate sessions, a youth convention for about 6,000 teens, junior high and children's conventions, and young adult activities.

This past July, youth representatives and MC Canada's Program Committee joined the MC USA Convention Planning Office to develop the theme for Charlotte 2005, taken from Acts 4.

On the last day of meetings, one participant talked about a sleepless night and how she got fixated on Acts 4:20, "can't keep quiet." The theme idea was tested in a joint youth/adult meeting and in separate meetings; each group independently settled on the theme, "Can't Keep Quiet."

Ken Gingerich, designer for MC USA and Mennonite Mission Network, created the Charlotte 2005 logo.—From MC Canada release